

The Crucible, Act IV by Arthur Miller
Reading Warm-up A

Read the following passage. Pay special attention to the underlined words. Then, read it again, and complete the activities. Use a separate sheet of paper for your written answers.

No one understood why Maggie was making such a big deal about the girls' volleyball team. They never drew much of an audience and usually had to struggle to find enough players. The boys' basketball team had just gotten new sweat suits, uniforms, and matching shoes, while the volleyball team had to make do with ragged old jerseys from ten years ago. Maggie was adamant that the girls' teams should receive equal treatment.

She spoke up in the middle of the school assembly, full of righteous conviction. The other students were so puzzled by her words that they remained mute at first, the auditorium silent when she finished speaking. Then, a few boys began to giggle and nudged each other on the arm, making fun of Maggie's seriousness. To them, she seemed like the embodiment of jealousy, a silly person who liked to complain.

"I think you make a valid point," said the principal, Mr. Beale. He then explained, however, that a private donor, Slocum Heating and Oil, had donated the new shoes and uniforms for the boys' team. For many people in the auditorium, including the girls, this seemed to clinch the argument, but Maggie would give them no reprieve. Her contention was that private donations had no place in a public school. Then she argued that if the school was going to accept such a donation, it was the school's responsibility to see that the girls' teams received equal support.

"Sit down and be quiet!" yelled a boy in the back row. Then a few more boys began to bellow in the same way. Maggie's face turned red with anger and embarrassment, but she would not sit down. Eventually, she got Mr. Beale to promise that the volleyball team would get new uniforms.

1. Underline the words in this sentence and in the first sentence of the paragraph that give a clue to the meaning of adamant. Use the word **adamant** in a sentence.
2. Circle the words that give a clue to the meaning of righteous. What are two synonyms for **righteous**?
3. Underline the clue to the meaning of mute. Use a word meaning the opposite of **mute** in a sentence.
4. Circle the words that offer a clue to the meaning of nudged here. What is a synonym for **nudged**?
5. Circle the words that offer clues to the meaning of the word embodiment. Use this word in sentence.
6. Underline the words in this and the next sentence that give a clue to the meaning of reprieve. What are two synonyms for **reprieve**?
7. Circle the clues to the meaning of contention in this and the next sentence. Use the word **contention** in a sentence.
8. Underline the words in this and the previous sentence that hint at the meaning of bellow. What is an antonym for **bellow**?